

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 1982, 12:35 P.M.
(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

MR. FISCHER: Good afternoon. I have several announcements today.

First, available in the Press Office is the testimony of the Director for the Bureau for Refugee Programs, Ambassador Richard D. Vine, before the House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Foreign Operations. The subject is "Fiscal Year 1983, Appropriation for the Migration and Refugee Assistance."

The Foreign Ministers of the three countries of the Central American Democratic Community -- Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Honduras -- will be meeting in Washington on Thursday, March 25. The Central American Democratic Community was created by the three countries on January 19. As you will recall, the objective of the group has been to defend and support democracy in Central America at a time of growing concern over security as well as economic difficulty. The group will be meeting specifically to discuss the Administration's recently-announced Caribbean Basin Initiative, as well as general developments in Central America. My understanding is that the Foreign Ministers will be meeting with the President Thursday morning and with the Secretary of State that afternoon.

I have a statement regarding the statements of the Honduran Foreign Minister: We welcome the Honduran Foreign Minister's strong expression of support for a lowering of the level of arms and militarization in Central America which he made yesterday in the Organization of American States. We believe these proposals are worth exploring as a means of lowering tensions in the region.

I would also like to announce that Congressman John P. Murtha, Democrat from Pennsylvania, will serve on the U.S. Observer delegation for the Salvadoran elections of March 28. Congressman Murtha, a member of the House Appropriations Committee, will join Senator Nancy Kassebaum, the head of the delegation, and Congressman Robert Livingston, as part of the congressional representation, along with the previously-announced five civilian members.